

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-09

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DRAFTED BY EA/VLC:BSKIRKPATRICK:FMLC

APPROVED BY EA:PCHABIB

EA/TB:GROBERTS

EA/P:MSMITH

EA:RHMILLER

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O 052129Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

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STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, TH

SUBJECT: INDOCHINA REFUGEES - RESETTLEMENT IN THAILAND

1. IN HEARINGS TODAY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW TO CONSULT ON BRINGING 11,000 ADDITIONAL INDOCHINESE REFUGEES INTO THE UNITED STATES, THE COMMITTEE PRESSED HEAVILY ON THE QUESTION OF RESETTLEMENT OF THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES NOW IN THAILAND.

2. ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB INDICATED THAT SOME WOULD BE RESETTLED IN THAILAND AND IN OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL. HE INDICATED THAT THE HILL TRIBES IN PARTICULAR WOULD PROBABLY RESETTLE IN THE AREA.

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3. THE COMMITTEE ALSO QUESTIONED AS TO WHETHER OR NOT

HIGH RISK REFUGEES WERE IN JEOPARDY OF REPATRIATION. MR. HABIB NOTED THAT WE COULD NOT BE CERTAIN BUT THAT AFTER A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME THE COUNTRIES IN WHICH SUCH REFUGEES WERE LOCATED MIGHT TAKE STEPS TO TERMINATE THEIR PRESENCE. HE NOTED THAT THERE WAS SOME EVIDENCE THAT REFUGEES HAD BEEN PUSHED BACK ACROSS THE BORDER.

4. MR. HABIB ALSO NOTED THAT THE THAI, IN COOPERATION

WITH THE US AND THE UN, HAVE WORKED TO MEET THE PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THIS INUNDATION OF REFUGEES OVER WHICH THEY HAD LITTLE CONTROL GIVEN THEIR HUMANITARIAN DECISION NOT TO CLOSE THEIR BORDERS TO THOSE FLEEING INDOCHINA. THE THAI ARE FACED WITH SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS OF THEIR OWN, AND DESPITE ASSISTANCE FROM US AND THE UN, THEY HAVE VERY LIMITED RESOURCES TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM. MANY OF THE INDOCHINESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND, THEREFORE, ARE LIVING IN VERY DEPRESSED CONDITIONS. ABOUT 2,000 OF THESE REFUGEES HAVE RELATIVES IN THE UNITED STATES OR ARE FORMER UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

5. ADDITIONALLY, THE THAI FACE THE PROBLEM OF RELATIONS WITH THE NEW REGIMES IN INDOCHINA. THEY THEREFORE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT GIVING REFUGE TO PERSONS IDENTIFIABLE BY THEIR FORMER ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES AND TO WHICH WE, CORRESPONDINGLY, FEEL SOME OBLIGATION. MANY OF THESE REFUGEES WE HAVE CHARACTERIZED AS "HIGH RISK" - PRIMARILY THOSE WHOSE POSITION IN THEIR FORMER GOVERNMENTS OR CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNITED STATES POSE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL AND POLICY PROBLEMS FOR THAI RELATIONS WITH THE NEW INDOCHINA REGIMES.

6. FOR OUR PART, WE OWE OUR CONCERN TO SUCH REFUGEES NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY CLAIM SPECIAL TIES TO THE UNITED STATES BUT ALSO BECAUSE FOR MANY IT IS THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THOSE TIES WHICH CAUSES THEM GREATER DIFFICULTIES THAN OTHER REFUGEES. BASED ON REPORTS FROM EMBASSY BANGKOK AND OTHER EMBASSIES, WE BELIEVE THAT THOSE TO WHOM WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION AMOUNT TO ABOUT 11,000 ADDITIONAL OFFICIAL USE

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TIONAL REFUGEES. TAKING THIS LOAD OFF THE THAI SHOULD HELP OUR EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE THEM AND OTHER COUNTRIES TO DEVOTE RESOURCES TO ASSISTING THE REMAINDER. KISSINGER

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